

(D-6) Please indicate whether you belong to a union.

1. I'm a county employee — and a union member
2. I'm a county employee — but not a union member
3. I'm not a county employee — but still a union member
4. I'm not a county employee — and not a union member

(D-7) What is the highest level of education you have completed?

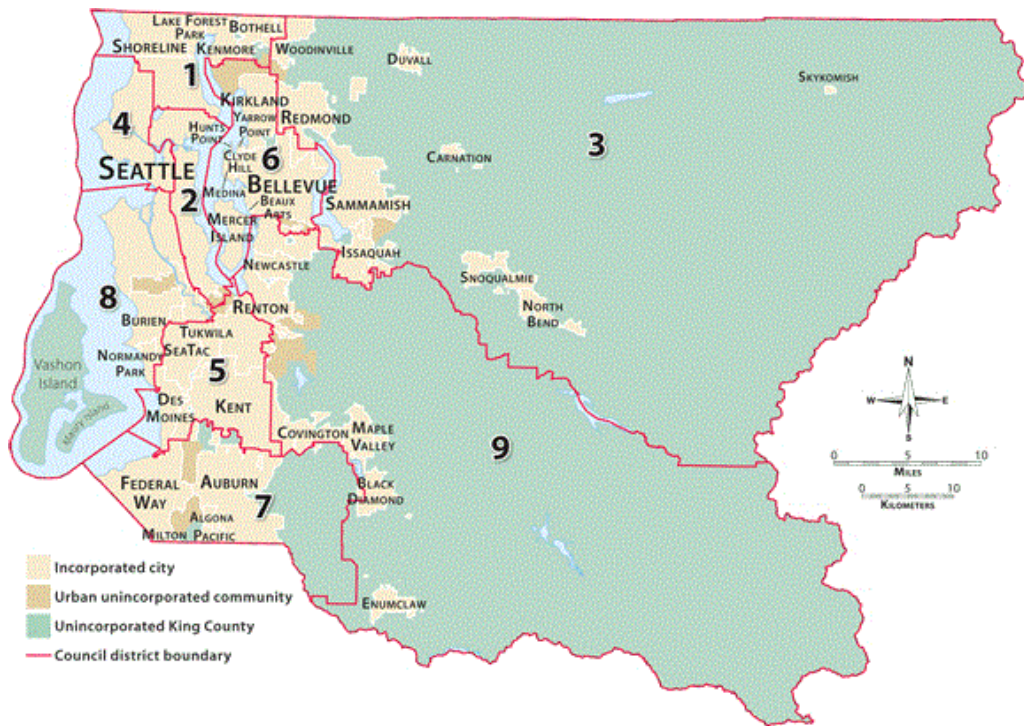
1. Grades 1-8
2. Some High School
3. High School Graduate (including GED)
4. Some College or Technical School
5. Technical School Graduate or Two-year College Graduate
6. Four-year College Graduate
7. Some Post-Graduate Education
8. Post Graduate Degree (Masters, Ph.D., M.D., J.D., etc.)

(D-8) Where do you live? (Please write both digits on your response sheet.)

Some Other Unincorporated King County

.....	(00)	Kenmore	(23)
• Four Creeks UAC	(01)	Kent	(24)
• Greater Maple Valley UAC	(02)	Kirkland	(25)
• North Highline UAC	(03)	Lake Forest Park	(26)
• Upper Bear Creek UAC	(04)	Maple Valley	(27)
• Vashon-Maury Island	(05)	Medina	(28)
• West Hill UAC	(06)	Mercer Island	(29)
Algona	(07)	Milton	(30)
Auburn	(08)	Newcastle	(31)
Beaux Arts Village	(09)	Normandy Park	(32)
Bellevue	(10)	North Bend	(33)
Black Diamond	(11)	Pacific	(34)
Bothell	(12)	Redmond	(35)
Burien	(13)	Renton	(36)
Carnation	(14)	Sammamish	(37)
Clyde Hill	(15)	SeaTac	(38)
Covington	(16)	Seattle	(39)
Des Moines	(17)	Shoreline	(40)
Duvall	(18)	Skykomish	(41)
Enumclaw	(19)	Snoqualmie	(42)
Federal Way	(20)	Tukwila	(43)
Hunts Point	(21)	Woodinville	(44)
Issaquah	(22)	Yarrow Point	(45)
		I Live Outside of King County	(99)

(D-9) If you live in King County, who is your King County Councilmember?



1.	Bob Ferguson (district #1)
2.	Larry Gossett (district #2)
3.	Kathy Lambert (district #3)
4.	Larry Phillips (district #4)
5.	Julia Patterson (district #5)
6.	Jane Hague (district #6)
7.	Pete von Reichbauer (district #7)
8.	Jan Drago (district #8)
9.	Regan Dunn (district #9)
0.	I work in King County but live elsewhere

(D-10) Have you ever testified at a King County public hearing or Town Hall meeting?

1. Yes 2. No

(D-11) Overall, what level of satisfaction do you have with King County institutions as a whole?

Extremely Satisfied (+++)	++	+	Neutral	—	--	Extremely Unsatisfied (---)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(D-12) How much do you believe King County decisions impact you?

Very Much (+++)	++	+	Neutral	–	– –	Very Little (---)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(D-13) Select one choice from the list below to optionally include your anonymous answers in a report for that single Round 6 Partner.

Our Partners are proud supporters of the Countywide Community Forums. Selecting a logo allows us to contribute your anonymous answers to a report for that one particular Partner. Our reports provide Partners with insights into the collective opinions of their supporters who are also supporters of Countywide Community Forums.

(Select "5" if you do not want your anonymous answers to be associated with a Partner.)

1	2
	

3	4
	

5
 No Affiliation

Countywide Community Forums, Round 6: King County Budget and Taxes

KING COUNTY BACKGROUND

King County covers 2,134 square miles- almost twice as large as the average county in the United States, with a population of more than 1.9 million people, making it the 14th most populous county in the nation. King County provides courts for resolving legal disputes, public health services, a jail, public transit, sewage treatment, records and elections, property tax appraisals, and regional parks and other facilities, like the King County International Airport (Boeing Field).

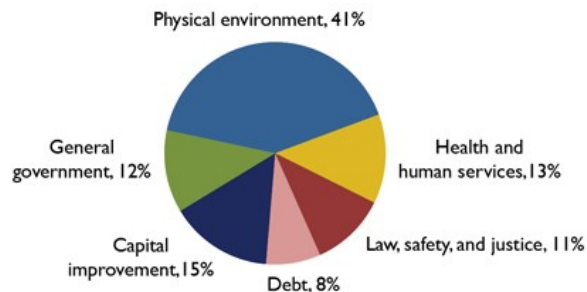
In unincorporated urban and rural communities, King County is the local service provider for land-use regulation, building permits, police services, roads, and local parks. King County also provides police services to some suburban cities.

KING COUNTY BUDGET BASICS

Dedicated and discretionary funds

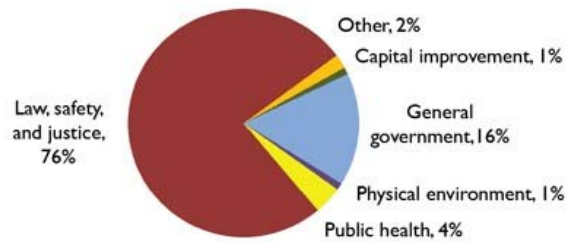
The 2010 King County adopted budget of \$5 billion (which includes the Metro two-year budget) is made up of both “dedicated” and “discretionary” funds. By law, dedicated funds must be used for specific purposes, such as transit, solid waste recycling and disposal, sewage treatment, environmental programs, capital improvements, debt service, public health, human services, and other programs. Dedicated funds made up most of the budget (87.6 percent) in 2010. The revenue for dedicated funds comes primarily from fees, user charges, dedicated taxes, voter approved special levies, and similar sources.

King County dedicated funds – 87.6% of overall budget



Various discretionary revenues made up the other 12.4 percent of the 2010 budget, totaling \$628 million of the \$5 billion total budget, and are known collectively as “the general fund.” Discretionary funds can be used for mandated or non-mandated programs. About 75 percent of the general fund is used for public safety and criminal justice. The rest goes to general government administration, public health, and, to a lesser degree, other purposes.

King County general fund – 12.4% of overall budget

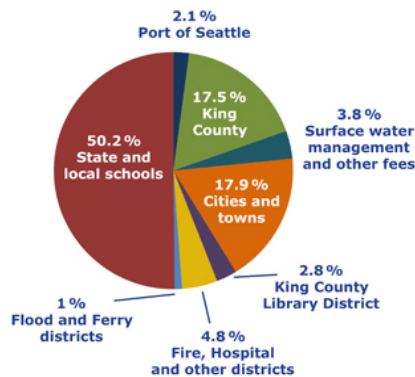


Sales and Property Taxes

The county collects two main types of taxes: sales and property tax. Out of the 9.5 percent sales tax levied within most parts of King County, the county imposes a tax of 1.0 percent in unincorporated areas and 0.15 percent within the cities. The County also collects 0.9 percent for Metro transit, 0.1 percent for mental health and substance abuse treatment, and 0.1 percent for criminal justice (shared with cities by formula). The remainder goes to the State of Washington (6.5 percent), Sound Transit (0.9 percent) and cities (0.85 percent within their boundaries).

Property tax rates vary across the county depending on specific rates charged by various jurisdictions. On average, 17.5 percent of property tax collected by King County goes to the county. The rest goes to the state; school districts; cities and other taxing districts such as libraries, fire districts and hospital districts.

Where your property tax dollar goes



THE KING COUNTY BUDGET CHALLENGE

King County has made extensive budget cuts for the past three years in order to maintain financial health. The King County General Fund budget was set at \$628 million for 2010, compared to \$627 million in 2009. In order to balance the 2010 budget, the County cut about \$56 million in costs that would have maintained services at 2009 levels. The 2010 cuts followed a \$93 million cut from the 2009 budget and \$60 million in the 2008 budget in order to balance those budgets. Many of those cuts were to human services, public health, capital improvements, and other county programs that could not be maintained at previous levels.

King County has taken the following steps to reduce costs and simultaneously maintain services:

- Spent cash reserves accumulated between 2004-2007
- Deferred maintenance on buildings
- Eliminated regional voting centers and drop boxes
- Reduced planned safety improvements for Superior Court
- Reduced Assessor, Elections, Council, and Executive budgets
- Eliminated \$150 million in spending over the last 2 years
- Reduced \$25 million of general fund for human services since 2006

The County anticipates a general fund budget deficit of about \$60 million for 2011. This will likely result in difficult budgeting decisions for county policymakers.

County leaders are calling attention to what they call a “structural gap” in the County’s budgeting system. State law only allows a 1 percent annual increase in county property taxes, plus revenues from new construction. This caps the County’s revenue growth at about 2 percent, or as much as 3 percent when the economy is growing. However, the cost of providing county services has risen four to five percent per year, partly due to personnel costs. From 2001-2009, salaries grew an average of 4.3 percent per year, and benefits grew an average of 6.4 percent. In addition, the recession has lowered property and sales tax revenues, affecting all county governments in Washington, as well as city and state government.

(B-1) Was this background information informative?

1. Yes 2. No

(B-2) What other background information could we have provided you with?

(Add comments to the response sheet)

TOPIC QUESTIONS

As you have been doing already, please continue to indicate your **ONE BEST CHOICE** for the questions below on your anonymous RESPONSE SHEET. Select the number below your answer and write that number in the appropriate field on the response sheet. If you have any questions, please ask your host for assistance. If your host needs further help he or she has a phone number they can call.

Choose **ABSTAIN** if you don't feel you have enough information at this time to select one of the other choices.

Choose **OBJECT** if you feel the question is poorly written or misleading.

If you choose "**Other**" please "write in" your particular answer on the back of the response sheet.

(T-1) King County has been making a good-faith effort to solve its general fund deficit and will continue to do so.

Strongly Agree (++)	+	Neutral	–	Strongly Disagree (--)	Abstain	Object
1	2	3	4	5	0	6

(T-2) The video described several options that King County is either using now or considering later to decrease the general fund deficit. Which single option do you think will be the most effective?

Cutting labor costs	Increasing efficiency/ productivity	Making program/ service cuts	Increasing revenues	Some other option	Abstain	Object
1	2	3	4	5	0	6

Some other option?

(Add comments to the response sheet)

(T-3) King County should be allowed by the state legislature to levy the same types of taxes that cities have, such as a county business and occupation tax or a county tax on utility usage or both.

Strongly Agree (++)	+	Neutral	–	Strongly Disagree (--)	Abstain	Object
1	2	3	4	5	0	6

The number of employees paid through the General Fund has declined by about 7 percent since 2001 but the cost per employee has grown substantially, with health care costs rising more than 58 percent since 2004. This reflects a national trend and an aging workforce, and the fact that more family members are covered under health plans. County employees have co-pays for health services, but don't typically pay a portion of the premiums.

(T-4) If labor costs need to be reduced, which single strategy would you view as the most acceptable, other than laying off employees?

Reduce health care benefits	Impose a hiring freeze	Increase furloughs	Reduce cost of living adjustments (COLA)	Reduce wages	Abstain	Object
1	2	3	4	5	0	6

Most King County employees get a cost-of-living (COLA) increase every year but for 2011 some employee unions have agreed to forgo the cost-of-living increases in their collective bargaining agreements.

(T-5) More of the county's collective bargaining units should agree to forgo their cost-of-living increases.

Strongly Agree (++)	+	Neutral	–	Strongly Disagree (– –)	Abstain	Object
1	2	3	4	5	0	6

(T-6) Even as it is considering program cuts, King County should invest in further performance management and budget reporting systems that deliver more efficiency, transparency and accountability so that decision-makers and constituents can be better informed.

Strongly Agree (++)	+	Neutral	–	Strongly Disagree (– –)	Abstain	Object
1	2	3	4	5	0	6

(T-7) Which of the following two statements comes closest to your personal long-term view regarding the budget?

1	We need to rethink our budget and make deep, permanent, long-term cuts because the current level of services is unsustainable
2	We must find short-term temporary reductions to the budget until the economy recovers, so we don't lose the investments we have already made in programs and people.
0	Abstain
6	Object

(T-8) In challenging economic times, what should be King County's priority, if/when these two criteria conflict?

1	Limit the tax impact on all county residents to help them cope with the economic crisis
2	Provide a safety net of human and other services to those most affected by the economic crisis

0	Abstain
6	Object

(T-9 through T-11) If it is necessary to cut staffing levels in various law and criminal justice departments to preserve existing county programs for crime prevention and crime victim counseling and treatment, how strongly would you agree or not to support cuts in the following departments?

	Strongly Agree (++)	+	Neutral	–	Strongly Disagree (--)	Abstain	Object
(T-9) Sheriff's Office staffing	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(T-10) Court staffing	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(T-11) Prosecutor's Office staffing	1	2	3	4	5	0	6

(T-12 through T-17)

Which of the actions below do you believe are more likely or not to fix the 2011 budget deficit?

	Very Likely to fix (++)	+	Neutral	–	Very Unlikely to fix (--)	Abstain	Object
(T-12) Across the board budget cuts	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(T-13) Cuts in specific services	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(T-14) Program efficiencies and/or increased productivity	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(T-15) Employee salary and/or benefit cuts	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(T-16) Increase in tax revenues	1	2	3	4	5	0	6

(T-17) Please indicate if you have another idea you believe is most likely to fix the 2011 budget.

(Add comments to the response sheet)

(T-18 through T-23)

Which of these same actions do you believe are more likely or not to fix the long-term structural gap in the county budget?

	Higher Priority (++)	+	Make no changes	–	Lower Priority (--)	Abstain	Object
(T-18) Across the board budget cuts	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(T-19) Cuts in specific services	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(T-20) Program efficiencies and/or increased productivity	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(T-21) Employee salary and/or benefit cuts	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(T-22) Increase in tax revenues	1	2	3	4	5	0	6

(T-23) Please indicate if you have another idea you believe is most likely to fix the structural gap in the county budget:

(Add comments to the response sheet)

(T-24) If you could ask county decision-makers one question, what would it be?

(Add comments to the response sheet)

PROCESS QUESTIONS

Please help choose future topics for the *Countywide Community Forums*, and help evaluate and improve the process you have just experienced, by answering the following process questions.

(P-1) Which of our previous rounds (if any) have you participated in previously?
(Indicate all one as appropriate on your response sheet or write "0" if none)

Round 1, Regional Transportation Jun-Jul 2008	Round 2, King County Budget Feb-Mar 2009	Round 3, Strategic Planning Jun-Jul 2009	Round 4, Public Safety Sep-Oct 2009	Round 5, Public Trust and Customer Service May-Jun 2010	None
1	2	3	4	5	0

(P-2) What topic(s) would you like to discuss in future *Countywide Community Forums*?

(Add comments to the response sheet)

(P-3) How do you rate the information presented in the topic video?

Excellent (++)	Good +	Fair or Average	Poor –	Very Poor (--)	Abstain	Object
1	2	3	4	5	0	6

(P-4) If you have visited our new website at CommunityForums.org how would you rate its improvements?

1	Very nicely done!
2	Pretty good
3	No big deal that I can tell
4	Worse than what you had before
5	Or how else would you describe the new website? (Indicate answer and comments on the response sheet)
0	Abstain
6	Object

(P-5) In general, do you think the topic video was:

1	Very fair and evenhanded
2	Somewhat fair and evenhanded
3	Somewhat biased
4	Very biased
5	Or how else would you describe the video? (Indicate answer and comments on the response sheet)
0	Abstain
6	Object

(P-6) How well did the question in this Opinionnaire® survey address the topic of “Citizen Priorities for Government in Challenging Economic Times?”

1	All major issues were covered
2	Most major issues were covered
3	Most major issues were not covered
4	None of the major issues were covered
5	Or how else would you describe the questions in this Opinionnaire® survey? (Indicate answer and comments on the response sheet)
0	Abstain
6	Object

(P-7) How positively or negatively has your participation in these *Countywide Community Forums* changed your perception about whether King County listens to your opinions?

Very Positively (++)				Very Negatively (--)		
	+	Neutral	–		Abstain	Object
1	2	3	4	5	0	6

(P-8 through P-10) How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree (++)	+	Neutral	–	Strongly Disagree (--)	Abstain	Object
(P-8) I feel better informed about the King County budget as a result of participating in this forum.	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(P-9) My participation in this forum will have a positive influence on my involvement in other local decision-making actions.	1	2	3	4	5	0	6
(P-10) Overall, I believe the Countywide Community Forums are on the right track	1	2	3	4	5	0	6

(P-11) How could the Countywide Community Forums program be more useful to you?

(Add comments to the response sheet)

(P-12) How do you think the Countywide Community Forums program could be more useful to county decision makers?

(Add comments to the response sheet)

(P-13) If you think any major issues were missed, or if you have any other comments or suggestions, please let us know.

(Add comments to the response sheet)

You can email additional comments and suggestions to:
CommunityForums@KingCounty.gov

You can also leave us voicemail at 206/296-1633 or 800/369-2584.

Invite your friends, family, and neighbors to register at:
www.CommunityForums.org

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO SHARE YOUR VIEWS WITH KING COUNTY!

The Countywide Community Forums receive no public tax dollars and is funded completely by tax-deductible donations from civic-minded individuals, businesses, and foundations. Please recommend us!

And please consider making a personal donation now, of any amount, using the envelope available from your host or at this Web address:
www.tinyurl.com/ccf-donation